The Industrial Labour Welfare Association Ltd.,

COIMBATORE.

Speech by

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Welcoming

Lt. Col. T. M. NARAYANASWAMI PILLAI,
Vice-Chancellor and Members of the
Syndicate of the Annamalai University,
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Dear Friends,

You may wonder why and how this meeting has been arranged in such a hurry, while the Vice-chancellor and the Members of the Syndicate have several heavy engagements in other places. Perhaps one of the important engagements may be to enjoy the salubrious climate of Ooty, atleast for a day or for a few hours, when they have come so near to Ooty from their places, where the heat of the climate is unbearable. True! everyone, while they are doing their daily routine work for the whole year without any leisure, must have some change. I was expecting an opportunity to say several matters on politics – politics means matters connected with my affairs – my affairs means between the Government and myself, between the public and myself and again between the public and the government. But all these matters are connected with industries, education and a little politics playing with prejudices. If I mention any of the matters here, it may prejudice you and me and the result will be some harm or some loss in some corner.

Hence I am explaining a subject which is very useful and is to be carried out wherever possible for the benefit of our unemployed youngsters.

If any person wants to bring out anything for practical use, he should follow some routine i. e. he must himself know the subject or material perfectly. He should put them to the experts or scientists for their opinion. Then only he should put it to the authorities and the public to utilise his findings. There is one other aspect also. Let there be any valuable thing or a rare thing. If it is given to the people, who do not know its value or if it is given to the people free when they don't make any effort to get it, generally it will not be appreciated or valued. It becomes valueless or rather useless. I have got practical experience in both these directions.

I made some experiments in agricultural line and achieved some success by some injections, changing the chromosomes of the plants viz. cotton, maize, papaya, plantain, red-gram etc. The result was high yield, good quality with high resisting power to stand against diseases. When I gave the seeds freely to all the friends who came to me for a period of two years, no body took care of them. As a courtesy

they took the seeds without any refusal. But, when I advertised that each grain of maize and each seed of cotton would cost Rs. 10/- and payable in cash within 3 days, more than 70 people visited and several people paid cash and took the seeds. Even from Calcutta a request was received for 100 seeds, with a condition that Rs. 10/- was to be paid for the germinated seeds. Then only a minister for agriculture took interest and tried his best to develop these methods. Before he started something in the work, he was made Minister for Education and he had to discontinue his efforts.

When I took these things to foreign countries, I found quite a different attitude. Every one took great interest and made experiments. I am not blaming anybody here, because it is the general nature of our people and the training of our people is such. I do not wish to speak further, as this will drag me into politics.

I want to say something about education in which the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the Syndicate of the Annamalai University are very much interested. A man, who has keen interest and inquisitiveness, finds a school wherever he goes and learns whatever he sees, whatever he hears and whatever he thinks. Generally people

think that school means a building with children or youngsters in village or in town with black-boards, pencils and books, learning knowledge from half-starving teachers and college means the big buildings in cities with several class-rooms and equipments, with large area to spend the leisure time, drama and music and lecture halls, in addition to highly furnished buildings called hostels with illconstructed kitchen and dining halls and with full of brainy, intelligent but indisciplined youngsters. Fortunately I had not been a student in any of the schools or colleges in our State or country.

As mentioned above every place is a school, every article is a school; everything can be learnt only practically. I had been in such schools seeing and learning only in practical ways in my everyday life. Of course I learnt something by seeing and observing the present schools and colleges in our country and also in other countries. In West, I took some interest to learn something and picked out some useful and practical methods. I had the opportunity for 3 or 4 years to try such methods in my own sphere. Then I had the opportunity of being a Principal of a Polytechnic, in which I was able to reduce the course of study from 4 years to 2 years. Not satisfied

with the system existing in the Government, I started this vacational course in competition, to finish the course within 3 weeks instead of two years and three years. After some experience, I increased the course from 3 weeks to 6 weeks. My first intention was to introduce a series of courses in cottage industries, in which 600 students are to be trained each year in 40 or 50 different small industries. When the students leave the study here, they will be able to start each one one industry, so that they can earn Rs. 1,000/- to 1500 each, a year according to their ability. I do not want to mention why this scheme was a failure. Then I started this short-term vacational course to give training in automobile, mechanical, electrical and radio engineering. Just at the time of starting, there were some troubles and obstructions. Hence, only automobile and radio courses were started.

After changing the duration of study from 3 weeks to 6 weeks, subsequently I could add a course in Elementary Bacteriology with the help of Dr. B. P. B. Naidu, who is an expert in Pathology with more than 50 years of experience. I want to mention here that with his elaborate knowledge and experience in indigenous herbs, two medicines were brought out – one for leucorrhoea and another for diabetes.

Millions of people are suffering from these diseases. On account of his ill-health, this course was discontinued.

A course for clock-making was also arranged, but sufficient number of students had not turned out. Hence this course was not started. So far, more than thousand students have gone out of this Association. While some of them are still continuing their education, except a few, which is less than about 50 in number, many of the other students are doing their own business or employed in public or private business.

While we have the best scientists in our country, we apply to Western countries for scientists; whether they are experts or not, we praise and appoint them giving all facilities. When we have experts in our languages, if a foreigner comes here as a pundit, eventhough he does not know our culture, we take him to be a God. Of course we have to appreciate the foreigners for having learnt our culture, but for the same reason we can't neglect our men of culture.

Once when Sir Shri Ram of Delhi visited this place, he asked the University Commission to see the courses conducted here and to adapt this system in some form or other.

The Secretary for Education also inspected and wrote as follows:–

"......He has experimented and researched along many lines, and has given much to the country, and I think the country has the right of expecting even more from him."

Dr. H. B. Mohanty, Planning and Reconstruction Dept. wrote as follows:

" ...The boys receive a type of training in your institution wh ch they will get nowhere in India and my firm conviction is that the training and moulding of character for which your institute provides facilities is unique in India......"

Mr. A. J. Lund, Engineer, wrote as follows:

"......But at first without seeing the actual methods employed, it sounds somewhat fantastic; but after seeing the methods, the various diagrams and instructional methods used, it is quite easy for one to understand how much knowledge can be acquired in the short space of time......"

Sir C. V. Raman wrote as follows:

"......In the magnificent Institution, which has been built by his personal

labours, the younger generation are taught to learn engineering by methods which the rest of India would do well to copy......"

Sir M. Visvesvaraya wrote as follows:

"......I have not seen any such initiative or enterprise working under such restrictions in any part of India..."

Dr. J. J. Rudra, Principal, Engineering college, wrote as follows:

"....You have achieved greater things as an engineer and have been a greater source of education to my students at Coimbatore than all the lectures and laboratory classes put together......"

Apart from this, some of the students who came from other universities and places also appreciated these courses. I give below a few instances:

Mr. M. R. Kalyanasundaram:

"......The training and lectures given to me will not only be helpful in my public life in the mechanical side but also in my private life such as, how to keep good health and to live happily".

"... I want to tell you sincerely that if you can maintain such high standard of training for all the time to come, you will be doing a very great service to India by producing practical engineers and technicians, whose services are badly needed in the building up of our new Independent India."

Mr. M. Dharmaraj:

"......I am cock-sure that every one will remember the days spent in Gopal Bagh, even though it was only a small part in his life, not because of the strict discipline maintained there, but because of the most useful knowledge gained in many an aspect of life in addition to the "automobile world".

Mr. H. C. Deo:

"......During the period of my training in Automobile Engineering in your institution as a candidate deputed by the Government of Orissa, I could acquire very useful knowledge both practical and theoretical which stands me in very good stead in my regular work"......

Mr. K. Sankaranarayana Reddy, wrote as follows:

"......First thing to mention about is my training at Coimbatore. That

training of mine at "Gopal Bagh" has opened a new chapter in my life quite unexpectedly: for, when I first wrote to you in April last for permission to work there, I never thought that my training would be such. I thought only that it will be like any other workshop. Now only I know what "Gopal Bagh" workshop is.

"My friends here ask me as to what my training was there at Coimbatore. I tell them most happily and boldly that I was a cleaner under a master-cleaner. Some of them even laugh at that fact, but when I tell them your views about that, they quite agree with those views; of course these are my views too now."......

A few years back I offered these courses with complete equipments to several institutions. None of them were prepared to take it up.

So far, by the training given here, the automobile students can start a small repair-shop and can develop to any extent while they can earn their livelihood from the starting. They can also start subsidiary industries for manufacturing automobile parts. In radio engineering, any student

who passes the subject here, can assemble a radio set in the shortest time and in addition to this, he can also start some subsidiary industries such as transformer manufacturing, coil-winding, wire-drawing and wire-enamelling, cabinet-making etc., and can earn his livelihood from the beginning of the starting.

In my recent visit to foreign countries, I have brought several schemes at the request of some friends and some officers in Orissa, Andhra and Madras States. I do not know how these governments can carry out these suggestions while the Planning Commission have set out plans for small-scale industries with orthodox methods, which are not possible to develop easily, without capital loss. The state governments also have no courage to start the industries in their own way.

Some time back, when I suggested the introduction of these courses in Annamalai University, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and Mr. Manavala Ramanujam, who were the then vice-chancellors, wanted to start these courses there. Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar also was very keen. I do not know why it was delayed. Perhaps it may be of the smell of government red-tapism.

A few years back, the government authorities were not in favour of such courses as is taught here. But now, I think they intend starting similar courses in several places. I saw some training plans mentioned in the papers, that the Engineering Personnel Committee set up by the Planning Commission has reported that they want engineering graduates: 1690, Diploma-holders: 5750, and Craftsmen: 2000. For this they have recommended to increase the capacity from 20 to 25 per cent and to start 15 more colleges and 62 engineering schools and two institutions for training craft instructors, with a total outlay of Rs. 15 crores. With all these, our Railways also are going to establish a number of new technical schools. Apart from these, our Government have proposed to start 3 higher technological institutions to have 800 undergraduates and 600 post-graduates.

While I do not know the syllabus or the quality of the students to be trained in the institutions, I am sure the students who come out of these institutions will not be able to do anything independently because, the course and guidance may be such. The number of technicians are not at all sufficient for the whole of India. Of course if the government is dare enough to shift from their existing curriculam to a

practical way as is done here, with the same capital expense, we can make double, triple or four times more number of students with higher efficiency to undertake any work.

Now the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the Syndicate have seen the students undergoing the course and seen what they have produced within these 3 weeks. They have seen the materials and their cost for manufacturing radios and machines that are made here for radio manufacturing and radio testers and some automobile parts that are also manufactured here. You have seen a tester costing 300 rupees out side, has been made here by a student at a cost of less than Rs. 50/- and a radio set costing less than Rs. 100/- is made here, while a set of its grade costs Rs. 300/- in the market. By the system adapted here, either this kind of Institution or small-scale industries started on the basis of this system, can earn its recurring expenses and a profit in addition to salaries. Unless a college or a school earns their recurring expenses in some form or other by the students, the students cannot serve the country. They may be useful only to serve as lecturers or demonstrators for no profit concerns.

As mentioned in the beginning, this subject has been placed before you voluntarily

without any pressure or expense. I hope you won't throw it away. Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar is very keen and enthusiastic to start such useful courses. The students and parents also are very keen to have such useful education. Without expecting the government grants, without binding to the Government proposals, by the amount proposed by the Raja's Trust, these types of courses can be started with much less expense, providing training to more number of students in a shorter time. I also have applied for the post of a Principal in such an institute advertised in papers, which you were kind to acknowledge. You are in the middle, between Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar on one side, and students and parents on the other side. If you do not take up steps to introduce this type of training even after seeing it in person, I do not know to predict the future. I hope you won't give the formal reply as is usually expected, but we hope we can see good things in action. I need not say anything more about our Vice-Chancellor and members of the Syndicate as every one of you know them more than what I would say.

THANK YOU ALL.

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